



# University of Connecticut

## Legislative Program Review and Investigation Committee Testimony

Mun Choi

Provost

University of Connecticut

-March 11, 2014-

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify and for your support of the University of Connecticut. The General Assembly's investments in UConn are the reason we have become a top choice for Connecticut's high achieving students and are now ranked 19th among public research universities in the nation by U.S. News.

As many of you know, my name is Mun Choi and I am the Provost at the University of Connecticut. Joining me today is our Vice-President for Enrollment Management, Wayne Locust and our Executive Vice-President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, Rich Gray.

We have enjoyed working with the Program Review staff over the last six months and are pleased that the report has shown the University of Connecticut is providing an affordable, high-quality education for our students, regardless of their economic means. As you know, the report found specifically:

Compared to its peers, UConn's prices are about in the middle or lower, and the cost of attending UConn has grown at a rate much lower than comparable institutions. According to the report, while the median cost of attending a state flagship university increased by 22 percent between 2008-09 and 2011-12, the increase at UConn was 9 percent.

UConn's federal student debt generally compares favorably to similar universities, and UConn short-term student default rate is low at 2.3 percent.

This commitment to students and their families has also been recognized by independent authorities like Kiplinger's Personal Finance, which has consistently named UConn as one of the 'best value' public universities in the nation – this year ranking UConn as the 25<sup>th</sup> best value among public research universities.

As President Herbst mentioned in October, the biggest indicator of affordability and the quality of our programs and services is student demand. UConn operates within a very competitive market where students have many options. And Connecticut's high-achieving students have the most options in deciding which institution they will attend.

While many colleges and universities have seen applications for admission level off or even decline in recent years, the number of applications to UConn has risen dramatically. 641 more freshmen enrolled in Storrs this fall, which represents a 21% increase over 2012. Applications for next fall have reached 31,800 a 10.5 percent increase (all campuses) over last year's number and the applicants are more diverse and more qualified than ever. The number of minority applicants increased 11 percent and the average SAT scores of the applicant pool is slightly higher than last year's average.

We are proud to have been successful in halting the so-called “brain drain” – one of the major goals of UCONN 2000. Undergraduate enrollment has grown dramatically as have degrees awarded. Merit aid has been critical in enabling us to compete successfully with outstanding out-of-state institutions for these high achieving students.

When students arrive at UConn, nearly all of them stay, with 94 percent of entering first-year students returning after their freshman year. The average time to graduation is 4.2 years, and UConn’s graduation rates – including those of minority and economically disadvantaged students – are among the highest of any public research university in the nation.

Despite fiscal challenges – particularly the understandable reduction of \$32 million in state funding since 2008 -- UConn’s commitment to providing the best financial aid package to those who need assistance most has not wavered. UConn continues to increase its student financial aid budget to meet the needs of our students. And when tuition rises, so does the amount of money set aside to support financial aid. In fact, the report noted:

Need-based financial aid has grown by 81 percent since 2005-06, and has gone to a larger portion of individual students.

UConn spent \$74.9 million on institutional grant aid for students in 2012-13, which has grown by 75 percent beyond inflation since 2005-06.

Of course, no conversation about college affordability is complete without discussing outcomes, particularly the retention and graduation rates as they have a direct impact on cost to students, families and institutions. The University is pleased to report success here as well with a six-year graduation rate that is one of the highest among the nation’s top public research institutions.

The University continues to be concerned about the national trend noted in the report that lower and low-middle income students are paying an increasing amount of their family income to pay for college. Despite budgetary constraints, we will continue to target state and institutional need-based financial aid to these high-need students.

Generally, we are supportive of the recommendations included in the report and would like to share the following:

- On recommendation number 5, regarding information about the credits of transfer students, please know that UConn maintains a full listing of direct course equivalencies for the Community College System and Connecticut State University System available in a student/consumer friendly format at <http://admissions.uconn.edu/content/transfer/course-equivalencies#/>
- On recommendation number 6, regarding graduate outcomes, please know that UConn has already agreed to participate in the P20 WIN system. Please be aware that this system is not currently fully operational. We are in the process of updating our Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) to be able to gather more systematic and comprehensive data about our graduates, by major, employment, and earnings. We believe that our internal processes will be ready by the end of this calendar year and we look forward to collaborating on the P20 WIN system.

Moving forward our core principles of access, affordability and quality will continue to guide every program we offer, service we provide and major decision we make. The commitment of our faculty and staff and the

strategic state support you have provided have made UConn an outstanding competitive value and enabled us to achieve the goals of UCONN 2000 by attracting a larger, more highly qualified and diverse students. Now, with *Next Generation Connecticut*, we will build upon our previous success, retain greater numbers of highly talented students in Connecticut, and be a force that drives innovation, stimulates economic growth and enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Connecticut.

Thank you again for your continued support of the University of Connecticut. I would be happy to answer any questions.



## Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee

### Study of UConn's Affordability to Students

March 11, 2014



## Affordability & Value

- Is UConn accessible, affordable and a good value for CT students?
- Based on the decisions of increasing numbers of high-achieving students and their parents make in choosing UConn:
  - The answer is a resounding YES
- UConn is a national public research university that competes with top flagships for students and faculty



## UConn's Competitive Marketplace

- Student demand is the most important indicator of value and affordability
- 80% of our UG students are Connecticut residents
- Since '95, we've made tremendous progress:
  - UG enrollment increased to 22,595 (54% increase)
  - UG degrees increased to 5,148 (74% increase)
  - Applications increased to 29,089 (169% increase)
- Storrs freshmen enrollment increased by 21% in 2013
  - Mean SAT score of 1233
  - CT Mean SAT score is 1018



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## CT's High-Achieving Students

- Since '95, UConn attracted over 1,700 Valedictorians & Salutatorians
- Since '95, Honors enrollment increased from 200 to 450 (a mean SAT score of 1413)

Mean SAT Score By Scholarships (For In-State Students)						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Nutmeg Scholarship	1417	1443	1426	NA	1450	1490
Academic Excellence Scholarship	1396	1404	1406	1403	1405	1416
Day of Pride Scholarship	1242	1250	1303	1246	1224	1310



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## Commitment to Diversity

- Since '95, minority freshman enrollment increased 250%
- Freshmen year retention of minority students of 91%
- 6-year graduation rate for minority students is 77%:
  - 71% for African American students
  - 76% for Hispanic students
- Proactive programs to promote academic success:
  - Institute for Student Success
  - First Year Experiences
  - Student Support Services
  - Living & Learning Communities

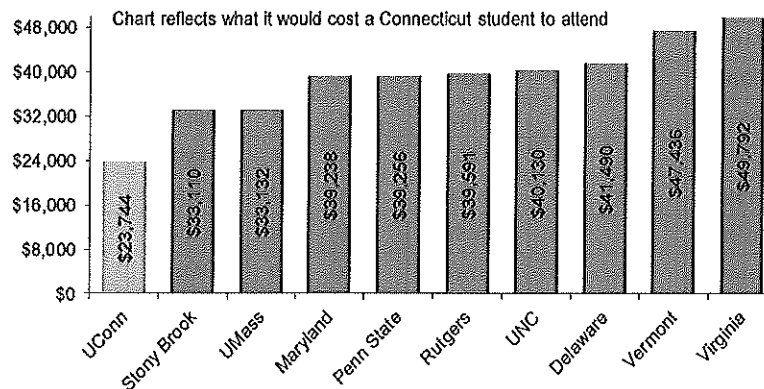


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## How Does UConn Compare?

- UConn ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the nation in percentage increase in tuition from 2006 to 2012

FY14 Total Cost of Attendance



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## How Does UConn Compare?

Tuition & Fees 2012-13			Average Debt at Grad 2013			FY 10 Default Rates		
1	Penn State	\$16,444	1	Rutgers	\$33,761	1	Penn State	5.3%
2	Vermont	\$15,284	2	Penn State	\$33,530	2	Stony Brook	3.7%
3	UMass	\$13,230	3	Delaware	\$31,002	3	Rutgers	3.5%
4	Rutgers	\$13,073	4	Vermont	\$27,725	4	Maryland	3.0%
5	Virginia	\$12,006	5	UMass	\$26,893	4	UMass	3.0%
6	<b>UConn</b>	<b>\$11,362</b>	6	Maryland	\$24,180	6	Delaware	2.4%
7	Delaware	\$11,192	7	<b>UConn</b>	<b>\$23,822</b>	7	<b>UConn</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
8	Maryland	\$8,908	8	UNC	\$20,951	7	Virginia	2.3%
9	UNC	\$7,694	9	Stony Brook	\$20,371	9	Vermont	1.3%
10	Stony Brook	\$7,560	10	Virginia	\$17,525	10	UNC	0.7%
CHE Tuition & Fees Tables			Kiplinger's Rankings 2013			College Results Online		

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## How Does UConn Compare?

% Freshman Pell Recipients 2011			% Undergrad Pell Recipients 2011			Pell 6-Yr Grad Rate 2012		
1	Stony Brook	38%	1	Stony Brook	36%	1	Virginia	87%
2	Rutgers	29%	2	Rutgers	29%	2	UNC	83%
3	UMass	25%	3	UMass	27%	3	<b>UConn</b>	<b>78%</b>
4	<b>UConn</b>	<b>23%</b>	4	<b>UConn</b>	<b>25%</b>	4	Penn State	77%
5	Vermont	22%	5	Vermont	20%	5	Rutgers	76%
6	UNC	20%	5	UNC	20%	6	Maryland	75%
7	Penn State	16%	5	Maryland	20%	7	Stony Brook	73%
8	Maryland	15%	8	Penn State	19%	8	Vermont	70%
9	Delaware	13%	9	Delaware	13%	9	UMass	66%
9	Virginia	13%	9	Virginia	13%	NA	Delaware	Not Avail
College Results Online			College Results Online			Academic Insights		

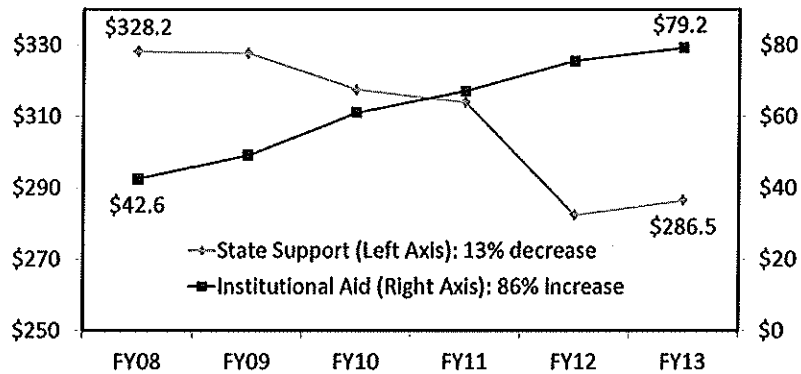
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## UConn's Competitive Marketplace

- Despite reductions in state funding, UConn increased its financial aid from \$17M in FY96 to \$85M in FY14 - 86% or \$73M is awarded to students with financial need



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## UConn's Competitive Marketplace

### Institutions Sharing Most Cross-Admits with UConn

	Fall 1994	Fall 2001	Fall 2005	Fall 2007	Fall 2012
1	CCSU	UMass	Northeastern	UMass	UMass
2	BU	URI	UMass	Northeastern	Northeastern
3	UMass	Northeastern	URI	BU	BU
4	Fairfield	BU	BU	Vermont	Delaware
5	URI	UNH	Delaware	Penn State	URI
6	SCSU	Quinnipiac	Quinnipiac	Delaware	Penn State
7	ECSU	Delaware	Penn State	URI	Vermont
8	BC	Syracuse	UNH	UNH	Maryland
9	UNH	Rutgers	Providence	Maryland	Quinnipiac
10	Quinnipiac	Vermont	Fairfield	Quinnipiac	Drexel
11	Providence	Penn State	Syracuse	Syracuse	BC
12	WCSU	Fairfield	Rutgers	Rutgers	Fordham

Note: Red Font = CT Institution, Blue = New England, Green = Outside of New England

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## UConn's Competitive Marketplace

- UConn is the 19<sup>th</sup> best public university (2014 *U.S. News & World Report*)
- Ranked higher than Purdue, Maryland, Rutgers & Minnesota
- Kiplinger's ranked UConn the 25<sup>th</sup> Best Value for in-state tuition among the top 100 public universities
- Average time to graduation is 4.2 years (5<sup>th</sup> out of 58 Public Research Universities)



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## Ongoing Fiscal Challenges

- Since 2008, our appropriation and fringe benefit allocation was reduced by \$41.6 million
- UConn is responsible for financing the operations of a mid-sized municipality (public safety, water, energy, roads)
- Since 1996, UConn has absorbed increased costs for education 7,500 additional students
- Future cost drivers include *Next Generation Connecticut* requirements (by 2024):
  - 259 new faculty & 6,500 new students



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## Conclusion

- Access, affordability and quality are UConn's guiding principles
- UConn is an outstanding competitive value for the state's most highly qualified and diverse students
- *Next Generation Connecticut* will enable us to:
  - Build upon our previous success,
  - Retain greater numbers of highly talented students in Connecticut and,
  - Emerge as a driver of innovation and economic growth



